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ABSTRACT

This introduction to the papers assembled in "Children of La Frontera" provides background information on Mexican immigration to the United States, Mexican migrant workers and their children, and implications for schools. It discusses economic forces in both Mexico and the United States that push and pull Mexicans to "El Norte"; the economic impact of the migrant agricultural workforce, including its contribution to an inexpensive food supply, subsidizing of California agriculture, payment of taxes, and underutilization of social services; the view of immigrants and migrant workers as economic and cultural threat; efforts to deny education to the children of undocumented immigrants; assimilationist approaches to education in U.S. schools versus bilingual, bicultural approaches; international collaborations in education at the national and state level; the involvement of migrant children in agricultural labor; factors in the migrant life style that affect educational performance; and the challenges of providing a good education to children who speak English as a second language. Contains 28 references. (SV)

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CHAPTER 1

Introduction

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In his foreword for this volume, Eugene E. Garcia uses a scholar's tools to make a thoughtful argument for improving bilingual and migrant education in the United States. He employs descriptive statistics and other research findings to tell us about the children in our schools, about the teachers who teach them, and the differences between them. He tells us plainly that we are not doing very well with these children. He reminds us of our history as a nation of immigrants and warns us about what it could mean to today's immigrant children and to our nation's future if we fail to meet the challenge of educating these young people.

Instead of using a scholar's tools, however, Garcia might have used a storyteller's tools in making his case. He could have told us the story of his own life. Born in Grand Junction, Colorado, on June 3, 1946, he is the son of settled-out migrant farmworkers from northwestern New Mexico. He, himself, worked in seasonal crops, harvesting sugar beets, cherries, apricots, peaches, apples, and pears. Garcia was one of nine children when his family became sharecroppers on one of the farms they had worked as seasonal laborers. At home, he and his family spoke Spanish. Today we call children like him and his brother and sisters *at-risk students* or *formerlies* (formerly migratory students).

Garcia did well at school. He was a leader in sports and school organizations and was a good student, graduating in the top 15 percent of his class at Grand Junction High School. But his SAT English scores were not impressive, and his academic talent was not always recognized. After being recommended by his Congressman for the U.S. Naval Academy, he was turned down because of those scores. His high school counselor told him that although he had a bright future ahead of him, he would never be a college professor.

Today, Eugene E. Garcia is the dean of the Graduate School of Education and professor of education and psychology at the University of California, Berkeley and the well-known author of books about bilingual students and their education. He is also the former director of the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Bilingual Education and Minority Language Affairs, a position to which he was appointed by President Clinton.

Garcia is only one of the formerlies whose words are included in these pages. Another, Gloria L. Velásquez, wrote the poem "Recuerdos/Memories" that appears in Spanish and English at the beginning of this volume. Her poem contrasts the living conditions she encountered as a migrant child—a *currently* (currently migratory child)—based in Johnstown, Colorado, to those she encountered as a formerly in Texas and Colorado after her father became a construction worker. She graduated from high school and went on to the University of Northern Colorado in Greeley, Colorado. It was there she lived in her first apartment with air conditioning, to which she refers in her poem. Today, she is a professor in the Foreign Languages and Literatures Department at California Polytechnic State University, San Luis Obispo, and has published and won awards for her poetry and fiction.

Keeping Garcia and Velásquez in mind, we invite you to read the words of Christina Quintanilla, Sandra E. Trevino, Carlos Carranza, Jorge Botello, and Maribel Ledezma in chapter 5. They are today's currentlies and formerlies. These young people and others like them are in U.S. schools today, and they could become the next generation of university professors and presidential appointees, here or in Mexico. As things stand now, the odds stacked against them are daunting. To succeed, they will have to be wizards of odds like Gloria Velásquez and Eugene Garcia. Or, as the writers of this volume suggest, we—the administrators, teachers, and professors—could find more ways to help them become resilient enough to endure the hard knocks that inevitably come on the way to a diploma, a trade, or a degree. We could also help them become confident enough to push back on doors closed by inappropriate evaluations, limited English proficiency, and societal prejudice. Or, we could turn our backs on them—or worse.

Forces Pushing and Pulling Mexicans to El Norte

Eugene Garcia was born in the decade following the Repatriation Program, which resulted in the deportation of 400,000 Mexican and Mexican American laborers and their families in the 1930s. Harriett Romo, in chapter 4 of this volume, describes this time in U.S. history. The immigrants deported in the 1930s had come to the United States earlier in the century, pushed out of Mexico by the forces of dispossession by land developers, social discontent, the Mexican Revolution, subsequent economic and political chaos, and finally, starvation. They were pulled toward El Norte by their dreams for a better life and by the need of U.S. industry for their labor—the same sorts of forces that had pushed and pulled European and Asian immigrants to these shores during the same period. They toiled—building railroads, working in factories, and helping create the great agricultural industry of California, Texas, and other regions of the United States. Industrialists considered them a good work force—easy to manage, hard workers for low pay. As their numbers swelled, however, they were increasingly seen as a threat to Anglo racial and cultural homogeneity. Anglo workers also began to see them as an economic threat. With the onset of the Great Depression, a clamor arose for the closing of the border, and for deportation of Mexican immigrants. By 1934, an estimated 400,000 people were deported to Mexico; over half of them were apparently U.S. citizens (Takaki, 1993). One observer in Santa Barbara, California, recalled the scene at the railroad depot: "They [the immigration officials] had boxcars and they put all the people that went in the boxcars instead of inside the trains . . . A big exodus . . . I'll never forget as long as I live" (Camarillo, 1979, p. 163).

Today's events are like echoes from that period. Disruptions in the Mexican economy—in part due to The North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA)—are pushing a new group of immigrants to El Norte. At this writing, the Mexican economy continues to be in deep recession, with serious shortages of jobs. At the same time, the labor force in Mexico is growing. In fact, some analysts project that the labor force in Mexico will grow by 2.1 percent annually at the beginning of the next century (Inmigrantes necesario, July 20, 1995). What will all of these young people do, who are now entering the labor market?

Many of them will resort to what other Mexican workers have resorted to in the past—leaving their homeland and traveling to El Norte, where low-wage work awaits them. Responding to the pull of jobs from the north, by some estimates, Mexican immigration is up 10 percent (Collier, 1995). According to Hinojosa-Ojeda and Robinson (1992), the U.S. economy requires immigrants to compensate for the low growth of its workforce. By the year 2000, the U.S. work force will grow at a rate of only one percent

per year, and this factor alone will stimulate the flow of the migrant stream from Mexico, which is expected to rise annually by between 110,000 to 500,000 persons.

Mexican observers are well aware of the ambivalence of American society to the influx of so many Mexican citizens to the United States. But as Mexican Ambassador to the United States Jesus Silva Herzog noted, the migratory phenomena responds to structural factors of the economies of both countries. He pointed out that Mexican immigrants are in the United States because the U.S. economy needs them and the immigrants subsidize important productive branches of U.S. agriculture, especially in California ("Illegal Mexicans Pillars of the U.S. Economy," 1995, p. A9).

Other U.S. observers have also noted the important role of Mexican immigrants and migrants in the U.S. and Mexican economies. According to Eric Schlosser (1995), by relying on poor migrants from Mexico, California growers have established a wage structure that discourages U.S. citizens from seeking farmwork. A system has evolved in which the cheap labor of Mexican migrants subsidizes California agriculture. At the same time, the migrants send money back home, which has helped to preserve rural Mexican communities that might otherwise have collapsed (Schlosser, 1995).

Impact on the Economy

At this time, most experts agree that it is impossible to gauge the size of the migrant agricultural workforce with any precision because, among other reasons, so many of the workers are illegal immigrants. By some estimates, depending on the crop, anywhere from 30 to 60 percent of migrant farmworkers are in the United States illegally (Schlosser, 1995). Philip L. Martin in chapter 2 of this volume describes what Labor Department studies have shown about the migratory workforce in the United States. He reports that today, there are about 840,000 migrants, and the typical migrant farmworker travels in a seasonal rotation between Mexico and one location in the United States. Huang (1993) reports the average life expectancy of migrant farmworkers is 49 years, and they suffer from many occupation-related and poverty-related illnesses. Infant mortality and mortality rates for children are substantially higher than the general U.S. population.

Migrants' importance to the U.S. food supply is stressed by Schlosser (1995), who reminds us that nearly every fruit and vegetable found in the diets of health-conscious consumers is still picked by hand: "nearly every head of lettuce, every bunch of grapes, every avocado, peach, and plum" (p. 82). This food comes to us inexpensively because of the labor of the

parents of Christina, Sandra, Carlos, Jorge, Maribel, and others like them and, too often, because of the labor of the children themselves (Huang, 1993).

Despite the contribution they make to the nation's food supply, these families are widely reviled and depicted as welfare cheats. They are seen as a drain on the economy. However, Mexican immigrants subsidize through their low wages not only agriculture, but also parts of the garment and service industries. Immigrants also pay substantial taxes, according to Karn, Olsen, and Raffel (1993), writing about the California economy. "As a group, immigrants underuse public assistance programs, including Medi-Cal. The undocumented, in particular, live largely in the shadows, working hard, fueling the economy, paying taxes from which they cannot benefit, and fearing government interventions" (p. 2). Julian Simon, an economist at the University of Maryland and author of *The Economic Consequences of Immigration*, often speaks out against critics who charge that immigrants use more welfare services than native-born U.S. citizens. Among his arguments is the notion that immigrants lighten the Social Security load imposed by a graying U.S. population. As more native workers retire and collect Social Security, immigrants, who typically enter the country in the prime of their work lives and tax-paying years, make up the difference. According to Simon, when immigrants do use services they do so in small numbers. About five percent of legal and undocumented people use free medical care, four percent collect unemployment, and one percent use food stamps (in Rocha & Frase-Blunt, 1992, p. 20).

History has taught us, however, that hard work for low wages is no protection against bad press and, consequently, societal rebukes. As the number of Mexican immigrants increased during the first two decades of this century, they were increasingly seen as threats to Anglo economic well-being and cultural homogeneity. Today, there are widespread reports of the insecurity of the U.S. worker as corporations ship jobs overseas. Patrick Buchanan, in his 1996 bid for the Republican presidential nomination, is said to have capitalized on that insecurity by calling for construction of a trench and barbed-wire barricade all along the U.S.-Mexico border. Even NAFTA advocate President Clinton called for stricter enforcement of laws prohibiting the hiring of illegal immigrants and for the strengthening of border enforcement during his January 1996 State of the Union Address.

Cultural Politics

And, just as in the old days, defenders of Anglo cultural dominance such as Allan Bloom in *The Closing of the American Mind* (1987) and E. D. Hirsch in *Cultural Literacy: What Every American Needs to Know* (1987),

urge assimilation to the European-American canon, to the exclusion of the contributions and experience of ethnic minorities. Meanwhile, Peter Brimelow in *Alien Nation* (1995) urges restrictions on immigration for cultural reasons. Brimelow warns us about fragmentation caused by the uneven distribution of various immigrant populations, to the point that the ethnic cultures concentrated in various large metropolitan areas will bear little in common with one another. And a popular radio talk show host declares that "[M]ulticulturalism is the 'tool of revenge' of many who have failed to assimilate and fit into 'mainstream American life'" (Stix, 1996, p. 22).

When the country gets into this kind of mood, it is not hard to understand how a measure like California's Proposition 187, "The Save Our State Initiative," could pass by a popular vote. Proposition 187 prohibited undocumented children from enrolling in public schools or receiving medical services, and required school and health service personnel to verify the legal status of students they suspected of being in the state illegally. They were to submit this information to local, state, and federal Immigration and Naturalization Service officials. Federal judicial authority superseded California voters, however. U.S. District Court Judge Mariana Pfaeizer rejected Proposition 187 as unconstitutional, pointing out that authority over immigration lies exclusively with the federal government (Guzmán de Acevedo, 1995).

Other federal protection allowing the continued education of immigrant children—documented or undocumented—is provided by the U.S. Supreme Court in its 1982 *Plyler v. Doe* decision. In that decision, the court found that education plays a pivotal role in maintaining the fabric of our society and maintaining our political and cultural heritage. The Court also recognized—consistent with all relevant studies—that undocumented minor children are likely to remain in the United States and, at some point, legalize their immigration status (Hiller & Leone, 1995). By protecting access to public schools, undocumented children are entitled to various programs, including bilingual education, Chapter 1, Head Start, free and reduced lunch, and others (Hunter & Howley, 1990).

So, perhaps this is where the echoes from the 1930s fade away, and we see how we have changed. The growing sentiment against Mexican immigrants led to the deportation of at least 400,000 people in the 1930s. As this book goes to press, the presidential candidate who has been most hostile in his attacks on Mexican immigration has been labeled an extremist, and he has dropped to a distant third place in the Republican primary race. The legal protections against Proposition 187 seem to be holding. But there is other evidence that our relationship to this important and growing minority group may be changing.

Implications for Schools

While the national debate goes on—about immigration, enforcing the border, and the merits of multiculturalism versus the European-American classical curriculum—teachers, teacher trainers, school administrators, and education officials have had to carry on with the practical business of schooling. In many parts of this country, that has meant the education of children who speak little or no English and who have come from Mexican schools. In some communities these children are immigrants—children whose families have moved across the Mexico-U.S. border permanently, many settling in the border region known as *la frontera*. In other U.S. communities, Mexican migrant children reside there for only parts of the school year, as they follow their parents' agricultural work. Most of these children, too, have had experience in Mexican schools. In chapter 3 of this book, Victoria Andrade de Herrera has provided a detailed description of the educational system in Mexico, a system that is far more comprehensive than most U.S. citizens realize. Although there are similarities between the two systems, there are also differences. The similarities and differences need to be better understood by teachers of binational children.

Increasingly, the migratory workforce has changed from one made up of native-born Anglo and African Americans with various home bases in the United States to a workforce that travels back and forth across *la frontera* (Martin, chapter 2). Teachers in agricultural communities all over the United States, including Michigan and other northern states, have children of these migrant farmworkers in their classrooms, children whose education is taking place in two different school systems. Teachers Mary Montavon and Jeri Kinser (chapter 14) describe such a community in Cobden, Illinois. They helped develop a successful summer program based on a philosophy that honors both Mexican and U.S. culture and language and recognizes the interdependence of the local growers and the hard-working, reliable Mexican workforce that comes there every year to help cultivate and harvest the fruits and vegetables grown in Cobden. Their program staff included two teachers from Mexico, whose work in Cobden was supported by the Mexican government. Marguerita Calderón in chapter 13 describes collaborations going on between districts on both sides of the border, in which native English speakers and native Spanish speakers learn together in both languages.

These programs represent a break from past approaches to Mexican migrant and immigrant education. In the 1920s and 1930s, Mexican children attended segregated schools in the southwest, where they received an education designed to keep them at the bottom of the socioeconomic structure. While there were exceptions, the prevailing attitude about educating the children of Mexicans was clear and openly stated: Educating

future laborers in skills other than manual labor or domestic service was asking for trouble (Takaki, 1993). As for curriculum and language learning, the goal of U.S. education has typically been to assimilate immigrant children into the Anglo American classical tradition with English as the language of instruction.

Today, we remain far from having reached a consensus in U.S. society about these matters, but as Calderón (chapter 13) points out, the many benefits to the U.S. economy and culture of having a well educated and bilingual populace are becoming more widely understood as the border between Mexico and the United States opens up. Increasingly, political, academic, and business leaders are forming coalitions and associations that span the North American continent. In education, these collaborations began taking shape several years ago.

New Collaborations

Some of the collaboration taking place in education began at very high levels. In August 1990, then U.S. Secretary of Education Lauro Cavazos and his counterpart in Mexico, Ernesto Zedillo (now President of Mexico), signed a *Memorandum of Understanding on Education*. The Memorandum has been amended and renewed since 1990 to focus on teacher education, teacher exchanges, Spanish and English language instruction, technological education, joint university meetings, mathematics and science teaching, and migrant education. Norma Varisco de García and Eugene E. Garcia describe in chapter 10 the series of activities that have taken place as the result of that agreement. Also facilitated by that agreement has been a series of colloquia involving Mexican and U.S. state and local education officials from the border states that have resulted in development of a common set of goals for education in *la frontera*. These meetings and their outcomes are described in chapter 11 by Betty Mace-Matluck and Martha Boethel. Robert Miller (chapter 6) describes other activities of the Mexican government to assist in the education of Mexican migrant children and adults while they reside in the United States. Mexican consulates located in major cities all across the United States have supplies of Mexican textbooks and other materials to assist in the education of Mexican migrant and immigrant children and adults. Miller's chapter includes a list of Mexican and U.S. organizations involved in various activities, and contact information for each.

Earlier in this chapter, we used California's Proposition 187 as an example of the public expression of hostility toward Mexicans and Mexican Americans, similar to the hostility expressed in the pre-Depression and Depression eras, which eventually led to the deportation of Mexican and

U.S. citizens. But California is also the home of Arlene Dorn, Adriana Simmons, Gildardo Villaseñor, and others who made some of the first attempts to form communication links between local school systems in Mexico and in the United States. These efforts, initiated in 1976 by Dorn, resulted eventually in the formation of the California Binational Program, which in turn grew into the Migrant Education Binational Program that now involves 32 Mexican and at least 10 U.S. states in information exchanges, teacher exchanges, and other sorts of mutually beneficial arrangements. This story of individual determination and subsequent large-scale cooperation is told in chapters 8 and 9. (Other aspects of the U.S.-based Migrant Education Program are described by Al Wright in chapter 7.)

A triumph of the Binational Program and its committee members has been to develop, revise, and gain widespread adoption of the English/Spanish language "Transfer Document for Binational Migrant Students" (see chapter 8). Despite cultural differences in decision-making styles, this document was developed and approved by governments on both sides of the border. As of August 1995, the Mexican Secretariat of Education[1] has printed over 200,000 copies of the document and distributed it to state and district offices across Mexico and to Mexican consulates in the United States. This is, in effect, a binational report card that makes it possible for Mexican migrant children returning to Mexico during the late autumn or winter months to gain entry into school. Before development of the Transfer Document, many Mexican children did not attend school in Mexico because they arrived home after the registration period. Also, in the United States they were often subjected to numerous assessments and sometimes to inappropriate placements in their classes. Development and official adoption of the Transfer Document took the persistent effort of people on both sides of the border to work out; it is an impressive example of how bureaucratic obstacles can be removed and information can be exchanged that allows for much greater educational access for children.

Another story of state-level cooperation—this time between Pennsylvania and the Mexican state of Guanajuato—relates to the need to share health information about migrant farmworkers moving back and forth between the two states. On behalf of the Binational Health Data Transfer Task Force, Edward Velasco Mondragón, Henry Stevenson Perez, and Johnson Martin describe the GUAPA Project, which could one day serve as another model for other sorts of educational and health collaborations that involve chal-

[1]The department that took the lead in adapting and disseminating The Transfer Document was the Subsecretary of Planning and Coordination, under the direction of Victor Manuel Velásquez Castañeda, director of the General Office of Accreditation, Incorporation and Revalidation.

lenges such as protecting client confidentiality and communicating cross-culturally within different organizational structures.

There are other binational efforts underway, not described in this volume. For example:

- The MINT Project (Migrant Instructional Network for Telecommunications), started in November 1994, develops and produces live interactive instructional broadcasts for migrant students, teachers, and parents.[2]
- The Texas State Department of Education and the Secretariat of Education for the Mexican state of Nuevo León entered into a goodwill agreement in 1992 involving Laredo State University and La Universidad Autónoma de Nuevo León. Public school districts in Texas send bilingual teachers to Nuevo León for summer study in Spanish, history, mathematics, and a variety of cultural topics. Educators from Nuevo León frequently travel to Texas seeking ways to better develop oral and academic skills in English and computer-assisted instruction. Other aspects of the agreement relate to seeking ways to recognize course credits granted at both institutions, exchanging information about bilingual instruction in science, mathematics, economics, elementary teacher education, graduate level teacher education, and establishing a coordinated research agenda (Binational Symposium II on Professional Development, 1995).
- The Binational Researchers Learning Community held its first conference in January 1996 at the Universidad Autónoma de Ciudad Juárez to share educational research findings. Papers presented at the conference will be available through the ERIC system late in 1996.

There are many potential benefits to f[illegible]ng these sorts of connections between nations. As people in administrative and policy-making positions get to know and respect one another, and as teachers share common experiences in the classroom and help each other discover ways to overcome difficulties in educating students, a network of friendships and professional exchanges based in mutual respect can grow. Such relationships make it more difficult for one group to rationalize exploiting or overtly working against the other's interests. That moves us a few steps closer to a safer, healthier, and more caring atmosphere for migrant and immigrant children and their families—one that makes loading people onto boxcars and shipping them away an unthinkable possibility.

[2]For more information, contact Zoe Acosta, MINT Project, Educational Management Group, 1300 17th St., Bakersfield, CA 93301-4533; telephone 805/636-4656.

Child Labor

One last time, we look back to the early years of this century in the United States. Vicky Goldsberg (1996), in her article "No Choice But Work," discusses the impact of Lewis Hine's somber, gripping photographs of the shocking working conditions of America's children in the early twentieth century. She comments, "Child labor was not exactly the optimal preparation for a good life in society." Young Sandra E. Trevino would doubtless agree (chapter 5). She tells us with vivid images about working conditions for migrant children in the 1990s.

> I arrive at five o'clock in the morning. While you are having your first dream, sweat washes my face, and I have bathed with fog in the long furrows. While you drop milk in the school's kitchen, I wish I could drink a drop of water because it seems like I never reach the end of the row. . . . While you checked exams . . . I revisited the fields, and sometimes I pulled out snakes instead of vegetables. . .
>
> Yes, I'm a migrant. I study when I can, so that someday I can stop being poor and stop crying in the fields close to the town that I never knew. And when I am in Laredo and I go to class, perhaps I'll get better grades than you my dear friend, because I am tired of being poor.

Most U.S. citizens live under the impression that the problem of child labor has been solved in the United States. However, thousands of migrant children work alongside their parents in the fields on both sides of the border. There are few legal protections for migrant children, and it is estimated that 25 percent of farm labor in the United States is performed by children (Farmworker Justice Fund, 1990). Studies show that at least one third of migrant children—some as young as 10—work on farms to help earn family incomes. Other children may not be hired laborers but they are in the fields to help their parents or simply because there is no available child care (General Accounting Office, 1992). The health of these children is at high risk from injuries resulting from various types of accidents such as falling from heights; drowning in ditches; and receiving injuries from knives, machetes, faulty equipment, and vehicles (Huang, 1993; National Rural Health Care Association, 1986). The health of migrant children is also affected by exposure to pesticides, including touching the residues, breathing the air, drinking the water, and eating the food. Children are more susceptible than adults, because they absorb more pesticides per pound of body weight and their developing nervous systems and organs are vulnerable (General Accounting Office, 1992).

In Mexico, too, families depend on the labor of children to survive. Martin's (1994) study, *Schooling in Mexico*, reports that declining real

wages have made Mexican workers' and peasants' families think twice about any unconditional commitments to basic schooling for all their children. They are faced with the task of balancing the immediate need for income contributed by the labor of their children against their children's long-term need for education.

Child labor in general and migrancy in particular surely do not constitute the optimal preparation for a good life in society. Besides the health risks associated with agricultural labor and poverty, migrant children cope with multiple obstacles to educational achievement, including discontinuity in their education, social and cultural isolation, and the strenuous work they do outside of school (Strang, Carlson, & Hoppe, 1993). Prewitt-Diaz (1991) conducted a study of Puerto Rican, Mexican, and Central American migrants. In 598 interviews investigating parents' perceptions regarding the education of their children, he found four major categories of factors affecting educational performance: ecological, educational, psychological, and economical. More specifically, he found that:

- Constant adjustment to school culture is very hard academically for migrant children.
- Support for migrant children was evidenced only in schools that had bilingual teachers and bilingual paraprofessionals.
- Migrant children are placed in the position of bridge between their family and external society. They become the link between the school and the parents, and they are the grocery shoppers, babysitters, and representatives of the family in hospitals and social agencies. Thus, their power as decision makers is important.
- Migrant children are often major contributors to family earnings. "[I]n the fields when you are twelve and bring in 17 baskets of apples, you have the same worth as any other employee in the fields. You are respected for that which you produce" (p. 485). Thus, the reality of the world of work frequently competes with the world of school.

With dilemmas such as these facing migrant children, educators must look for ways to tip the balance in favor of attending school. Flores (1992) reports the extreme shortage of Hispanic high school counselors. Stephanie Bressler, in her study of Latina migrant mothers in Pennsylvania (chapter 18, this volume) concluded:

> Latina migrant mothers need the support of migrant educators to help them find ways to explore productively these new [educational] avenues for their children. There are natural alliances to be developed between educators and migrant mothers who share similar goals for their children. The concept of parental involvement should be expanded to include ways educators can empower mothers to find these avenues for

their children and negotiate the many cultural and lifestyle stumbling blocks that threaten to get in their way.

Nancy Feyl Chavkin and Alicia Salinas Sosa (chapters 19 and 20) each explore this relationship between the mutual interest of schools and parents in supporting education. Each suggests ways of identifying obstacles and organizing efforts to motivate children to stay in school and help them develop the resilience and confidence they will need to graduate. So, part of what we need to do to help children like Sandra Trevino feel cherished is to get to know their families and treat them with the respect they deserve.

But more importantly, we need to face the fact that we as a society have turned a blind eye on the social and legal structures in our market economy that tolerate and recruit children and youth, in the name of survival, to labor in the fields alongside their parents.

Challenges in the Classroom

Most of the children we have described in this chapter speak Spanish as their first language. That fact affects everything else related to their schooling, so a discussion of classroom concerns must begin with an examination of the challenge of bilingual education. Thomas and Collier (forthcoming) tracked language minority students' academic progress over time by examining the academic achievement measures used by school systems. In brief, they found that at least 7-10 years are needed for non-native English speakers with no schooling in their first language to reach age- and grade-level performance if instruction is given only in English. Students with 2-3 years of first language schooling in their home country take at least 5-7 years, and students schooled in high-quality bilingual programs in the United States require 4-7 years to reach native-speaker performance levels. These findings hold true regardless of other background variables such as socioeconomic status and home language.

Unfortunately, according to Spray, well-prepared bilingual teachers, resources, and materials are in short supply. In fact, the National Association of Bilingual Education (NABE) estimates that the United States needs 175,000 more certified bilingual teachers than are currently available (Spray, 1994, p. 3). Of the available pool, some are only conversationally proficient in a second language while others have been rushed through language courses. Many teachers in Mexico are not well prepared to teach English, either. Teachers educated in Mexico's normal schools take a four-hour English course in their last semester. Clearly, there is tremendous work to be done in developing an adequate supply of bilingual teachers even within optimum circumstances; however, in a climate that is hostile to bilingual education, the prospects for meeting the need would be less favorable.

Finally, we want to direct your attention to the chapters by John Kibler (chapter 15), Kathy Escamilla (chapter 16) and Walter G. Secada and Yolanda De La Cruz (chapter 17). Kibler provides guidance in the use of Latino children's literature in the classroom, Escamilla urges the teaching of Mexican American history within the social studies curriculum, and Secada and De La Cruz describe how to teach mathematics for understanding in the bilingual classroom. Each of these chapters discusses the cultural and linguistic frameworks necessary to make classrooms more relevant and inclusive for Mexican immigrant and migrant students.

Concluding Thoughts

According to the National Agricultural Workers Survey data collected by the U.S. Department of Labor, there are approximately 840,000 migrant farmworkers, who are mostly based in Mexico and spend part of each year in the United States. Traveling with them are 409,000 children and an additional 169,000 youths traveling to do farmwork without their parents. Martin (chapter 2) estimates that 67 percent of these workers were unauthorized at the time the survey was taken in 1989, or had been unauthorized until 1987-88. That is a large number of people.

Ricardo Insunza, deputy commissioner at the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS), is quoted (Rocha & Frase-Blunt, May 1992) as saying, "We are now seeing more family reunification. The breadwinner who has been here for a few years sends for his family, so there are more women and children crossing the ravines at night" (p. 16). According to Insunza, the INS acknowledges that it is simply not possible to halt illegal immigrants. "There is not the will, nor the way" (p. 18). Montavon and Kinser (chapter 14) noticed the increased number of children in their rural Illinois community, which used to see mostly men return each year to work the fields and orchards.

These are the children of *la frontera* and they live here amongst us with their hard-working families. Perhaps it is time we made them feel welcome.

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